ID:88081918 Box 24, 24-05

GRAND STAIRCASE ESCALANTE

NATIONAL MONUMENT

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

SPACE

"...But it's big country out there. With a topo map and a beat-up jeep—or better yet, a backpack—there's still solitude to be found, adventure with the smell of danger, and the wonder of a raw, unfinished, and awesomely beautiful world."

–William B. Smart

A few miles north of Kanab, Utah, a golden eagle spreads her wings on the warm air of a thermal and begins to climb in wide circles. When she has risen a few thousand feet, she glides toward the northeast and soon crosses the western edge of the 1.7-million-acre Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument. Below her unfolds a territory of multicolored cliffs, plateaus, mesas, buttes, pinnacles, and canyons. The eagle's flight will take her across the three distinct sections of the Monument: the Grand Staircase, the Kaiparowits Plateau, and the canyons of the Escalante. Despite their different topographies, these three sections share certain qualities: great distances, enormously difficult terrain, and a remoteness rarely equaled in the lower forty-eight states. Human endeavors have always been limited on these lands, yet their very remoteness and isolation have attracted seekers of adventure or solitude and those who hope to understand the natural world through the Monument's wealth of scientific information.

ROCK

Below the soaring eagle the land rises in broad, tilted terraces which form the Grand Staircase. From the south the terraces step up in great technicolor cliffs: Vermilion, White, Gray, Pink. Together these escarpments expose 200 million years of the earth's history in a dramatic geologic library.

The deep, brilliant red Moenkopi sandstone of the Vermilion Cliffs, with their flared bases of Chinle badlands, contain many fossils of fish and early dinosaurs from the Triassic Period. A step north, the nearly unbroken line of the White Cliffs is composed of Jurassic sand dunes solidified into Navajo sandstone.

Above the White Cliffs, the younger, shaley Gray Cliffs present a softer profile. Deposited when an ocean covered the land, they contain evidence of marine life: sea shells, shark's teeth, beds of coal from compressed swamp and marsh plants. At the top of the Grand Staircase, the limey siltstone Pink Cliffs were deposited by an ancient freshwater lake and now lie mostly in Bryce Canyon National Park.

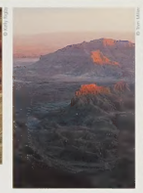
Into this staircase of cliffs and terraces, the Paria River and its tributaries have carved a landscape of isolated mesas, valleys, buttes, and narrow canyons, where the eagle's eyes detect the glint of water.

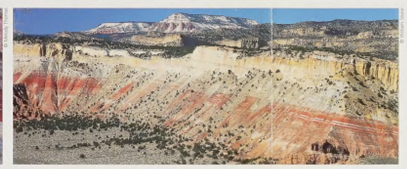
Above: Paria River drainage with colorfully banded Chinle badlands, Grand Staircase. Below: Sunset glow on the cliffs of the Paria River drainage, Grand Staircase.

The Cockscomb, Grand Staircase. The Cockscomb's double row of steeply tilted fins starts near the Arizona border and runs north to Canaan Peak (9,295 ft.) northeast of Henrieville. It is one of the Monument's most startling geologic features. The Cockscomb is the northern extension of the East Kaibab Monocline, a hundred-mile-long flexure in the earth's crust. It separates the Grand Staircase from the Kaiparowits Plateau. Above right: Devils Garden, Escalante Canyons.

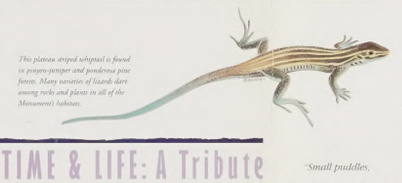
"The colors are such as no pigments can portray. They are deep, rich, and variegated, and so luminous are they, that light seems to glow or shine out of the rock rather than to be reflected from it."

–Major Clarence E. Dutton, 1880





Above: Unusual sandstone colors in the lower Paria River drainage near Pahrush town site, Grand Staircase. Above right: Round Valley area with 10,000-foot Powell Point in the distance, Grand Staircase.



This plateau striped whiptail is found in pinyon-juniper and ponderosa pine forests. Many varieties of lizards dart among rocks and plants in all of the Monument's habitats.

WIND

Pushed by a southwesterly wind, the eagle crosses the jagged double edge of the Cockscomb and soars out above the Kaiparowits plateau, the highest part of the Monument. From the air, the Plateau appears to fan out southward from the town of Escalante into an enormous grayish green scalene triangle, ending far to the south at Lake Powell and the Paria Plateau. The 800,000-plus acres of the Kaiparowits form the wildest, most arid, and most remote part of the Monument.

The fossil-rich rocks of the Kaiparowits contain perhaps "the best and most continuous record of Late Cretaceous terrestrial life in the world." The plateau has been described as a "stony, desiccated maze of canyons," with few isolated springs and a handful of creeks. It is a land of broad canyons, sheer cliffs, red hills of oxidized rock created by underground coal fires, and soils poisonous to most plants. But it is also a land of forested, level benches, thousand-year-old junipers, and a rich variety of mammals and birds, including seventeen species of raptors that ride the ever-present winds.

The forty-two-mile-long Straight Cliffs mark the eastern edge of the plateau, ending at Fiftymile Mountain in the southeast. Nowhere else in this remarkable Monument do the words *wind*, *space*, *solitude*, *silence*, and *distance* have as much meaning as here.

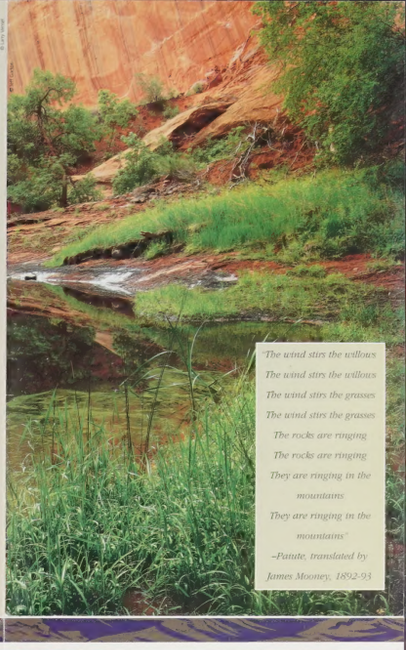
Above: Eroded gray shales near Nipple Bench, Kaiparowits Plateau. Top right: Canyon wall reflections, Escalante Canyons. Far right: Grasses and reeds along a canyon pool, Escalante Canyons.

Reaching the Straight Cliffs, the eagle ascends an invisible column of warm air rising from Fiftymile Bench, 2,000 feet below. To the north she can see the Aquarius Plateau, dominated by 11,000-foot Boulder Mountain. To the east lies an expanse of pale Navajo sandstone which the Escalante River and its tributaries, flowing down from the plateau, have carved into a maze of canyons. In this arid territory, it is ironically water that has done the most to shape the landscape.

But this land of rock surprises: deep in the canyons along sun-dappled streams, lush riparian worlds flourish. Cottonwoods, box elder, willows, Gambel's oak, and the introduced tamarisk form often impenetrable thickets. Shaded alcoves and undercut rock faces reveal hanging gardens, nourished by dripping seeps. From a ledge high up on the canyon wall floats the haunting diminuendo of a canyon wren's song.

When the eagle notices the green in the canyons she begins to descend. But since she is a bird of open spaces, narrow canyons hold only passing interest for her. She flies on, toward the Circle Cliffs and the Waterpocket Fold, at the eastern boundary of the Monument. Her shadow brushes across the rock, following her.

WATER



"The wind stirs the willows
The wind stirs the willows
The wind stirs the grasses
The wind stirs the grasses
The rocks are ringing
The rocks are ringing
They are ringing in the mountains
They are ringing in the mountains

–Paiute, translated by James Mooney, 1892-93

Above: Swirling, silt-laden water has sculpted sandstone waves in this slot canyon, Escalante Canyons. Above right: Fractured and eroded white Navajo sandstone, Escalante Canyons.

"Yet the remoteness, the size, the harsh terrain, the heat, the aridity, . . . the wind, the silence when there is not wind, the overpowering solitude of the Kaiparowits—these are precisely the commodities which make it valuable. It is a fierce and dangerous place, and it is wilderness right down to its burning core."

–Ray Wheeler

PACK RAT LIBRARIES

What's a pack rat? It is, in fact, not a rat but a vole. What's a midden? A fancy name for a pile of trash. What's a pack rat midden? A trash pile adjacent to the rat's home. What's so special about a pile of trash? Aha! Glad you asked.

Pack rats build mounds of debris, piling them up at the base of trees, cacti or in rock crevices. These dens contain an average of 20 cubic feet of material and act as both protective fort and insulation over the rat's nest.

Pack rat nests may be continuously occupied for hundreds, even thousands of years. The middens are created layer on layer by generations of pack rats carrying seeds, twigs, and other matter back to their dens. Cemented together by urine, both nest and midden can be preserved for a very long time by the arid environment of the Monument and the desert Southwest. They provide plant ecologists with clues to climatic conditions and vegetation patterns dating back as much as 25,000 years. For example, pine seeds found in an ancient pack rat nest in what is now desert are evidence that a cooler and wetter climate existed at that time.

The Escalante, its side canyons, and the upper Paria are particularly noted for their concentrations of pack rat middens.

"I have loved the red rocks, the twisted trees, the red sand blowing in the wind, the slow, sunny clouds crossing the sky, the shafts of moonlight on my bed at night. I have seemed to be at one with the world."

–Everett Ruess

Toadstool capstocks north of Highway 89, Grand Staircase.

UNDERFOOT AND ALL AROUND

The term *life-zones* describes the changing vegetation found at different elevations. In the Monument, where elevation ranges from 4,500 to 8,500 feet, low desert shrub grades into grassy steppe, sage, and pinyon-juniper woodlands, eventually to ponderosa pine at higher elevations, sometimes in a remarkably short distance. But this tells only part of the story.

What grows where depends not only on temperature and moisture, determined by elevation, but perhaps more importantly on soils. Eroded sandstone can create pockets of moisture-holding sandy soil, which can support an abundant mix of grasses, shrubs and trees. In contrast, the austere gray barrenness of parts of the Kaiparowits Plateau is a result of its mix of Cretaceous-age shales. Unlike wind-shaped or stream-deposited sandstones, these shales were formed in deep, stagnant, oxygen-poor waters of a Cretaceous sea. When erosion reexposes them to oxygen and to rain, a chemical reaction takes place, which can produce sulfuric acid, salts, and sodium. These chemicals are toxic to most plants except for a few salt-tolerant shrubs, cacti, and forbs such as prince's plume and sego lily.

But the story of soils doesn't end here. Some soils themselves are alive. The inconspicuous dark grayish brown "crust" which covers perhaps three-quarters of the Colorado Plateau is known as cryptobiotic soil. This delicate crust is made up largely of a filament-forming blue-green algae whose sticky sheaths cling to soil particles and are interspersed with tiny lichens, green algae and micro-fungi. The crust, easily crushed by automobile or bicycle tires, hiking boots, or animal hooves, plays an important role in holding soil together and slowing down erosion. It also helps provide nutrients to desert plants.

The sphaeralcea prince's plume can tolerate selenium-rich soils, which are toxic to many other plants. Selenium is often found in the same formations as uranium.

HANGING GARDENS

Not all the water runs off slickrock when snows melt or rains fall. Some of it seeps down into the rock, and begins a journey through tiny fracture lines and cracks deep into the sandstone. Water traveling through the rock may emerge hundreds or thousands of feet below, perhaps miles away, as a spring, sometimes as a gushing cascade, but more commonly as a trickle of seeping or dripping water. Navajo sandstone is particularly kriown for its water-bearing capacities.

Wind-blown dust particles adhere, layer upon layer, to the moist rock; mosses and flowering plants take hold. Maidenhair fern, monkeyflower, alcove-bog orchid, and Navajo sedge cling to the rock wall, creating miniature oases surrounded by barren rock. One can unexpectedly come upon on a hanging garden in many canyons, but the Escalante and its tributary canyons, Upper Paria and Hackberry canyons, and Bull Valley Gorge are particularly rich in hanging gardens.

Right: Along many canyons in the Monument, Woodhouse's toads find refuge in hanging gardens of maidenhair ferns and blooming monkeyflowers.

SPANS OF TIME & LIFE: A Tribute

What do you do all day?" asks Carol, who likes to experience the world through physical activities.

The old man looks over his left shoulder, toward the mountains behind the ranch then lets his gaze slowly drift down descending foothills covered with pinyon and juniper, over outcroppings of red rock bordering the north side of the irrigated pasture, then out onto the vastness of land that stretches as far as the horizon, which is very far. He smiles.

"I'm just here," he says.

Behind those three words is a lifetime of eighty-two years. And behind that is yet another span of time, that of his parents who homesteaded the ranch. And woven into that time—his and his parents'—are the everydays of those who live on the edge of the rock wilderness. Good years and bad; years when the rains come and years when they don't; and when a whole century's worth of rain comes all at once. And the minutiae of daily chores: from putting up fence posts or digging irrigation ditches to busting for stray calves among the maze of rock.

"I'm just here," he says, and he is. Like the rocks around him, like the junipers and the wind. He is part of the land in a way we, who are visitors, can never be.

"Small puddles, like shining eyes, fuse the colors of pink rocks and cerulean sky, and wet ripples of mud may do the same thing. In the changing light nothing remains the same from year to year or hour to hour. Flood and drouth, heat and cold, life and death alter the finer details incessantly, but they leave unchanged the grand plan."

–Eliot Porter

PASSING THROUGH

The sequence of peoples who lived in and around the Monument reaches back at least 8,000 years. The most visible signs of pre-European human activity—petroglyphs, granaries, dwellings—were left by people of the Fremont and Anasazi cultures, who for several hundred years occupied the area. By around AD 1300 both Fremont and Anasazi were gone from the region. They were followed by the Southern Paiute, who moved into the what is now the Monument, and the Ute, Hopi, and Navajo who journeyed there occasionally.

These were the tribes Mormon pioneers, who also had a history of migrations and abandonments, encountered when moving into the area in the 1860s and 1870s. Tropic, Escalante, and Boulder were all founded during this time, together with other settlements, such as Pahrah, which were later abandoned. Isolated and remote like the Monument itself, these small communities relied on farming and ranching for their existence. The isolation was interrupted briefly in the 1950s, when prospectors in search of uranium explored much of what is now the Monument. More recently tourists, hikers, and others seeking the solitude and beauty of this rock wilderness have been visiting in increasing numbers.

But, like those who came before them, they too will only be passing through.

SLOT CANYONS

Across the Colorado Plateau, water has eroded countless canyons in thousands of feet of undeformed layers of sediment, creating unforgettable landforms. In many places in the Monument, the familiar stepped-back canyons and mesas are replaced with equally dramatic slot canyons.

These narrow passageways, some only ten inches wide at the bottom, form when rock is the same composition from top to bottom. Streams carrying grains of sand and larger rocks cut down like a chainsaw through wood. The rock's uniform hardness does not provide an opportunity for the water to erode one part more than another, so the canyon remains almost the same width as it wears down. Walking in the soft, rock-muted light of slot canyons, it is easy to forget that these narrow passageways can easily become death traps, sometimes caused by a storm miles and miles away.

NOWHERE BUT HERE

Geology unequalled anywhere on the Colorado Plateau; a diverse array of ecosystems, one of the best and most continuous fossil records of late Cretaceous life in the world; evidence of three major prehistoric cultures. These are but a few of the treasures the Monument holds for scientific study.

Remoteness, isolation, and sheer size have played an important part in making the Monument such a significant outdoor laboratory. Remoteness has minimized human impact: several relict grasslands and riparian areas, inaccessible to livestock, provide an opportunity to study native vegetation undisturbed by grazing.

Isolation, and a scarcity of roads which would have acted as conduits for invasion by non-native plants, have kept the Monument relatively free of exotic plant species. In addition, the great diversity of soils has resulted in a high level of plant endemism: eleven *nowhere but here* species are found only in the Monument.

Three major floras meet in the Monument, making it the richest floristic region in the intermountain West. Plants from the Mojave and Sonoran deserts and the Great Basin are all found here, with a few species from the Great Plains.

Combined with the adjacent Dixie National Forest, Capitol Reef and Bryce Canyon national parks, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and the Paria Canyon–Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness, the Monument forms a unit of more than 3.5 million acres of Colorado Plateau lands. Large contiguous areas are very important for maintaining the evolutionary potential of plants and animals, for migratory corridors, and for the exchange of genetic material between different populations.

In spite of its often barren appearance, the Monument has a surprisingly diverse fauna. From elk that migrate to lower elevations in winter to pronghorns and pack rats, the Monument is home to more than 300 species of amphibians, birds, mammals, and reptiles, including the endangered bald eagle and peregrine falcon.

Top: The Monument is home to a large and diverse population of raptors, including the endangered peregrine falcon. Above: Forests of pinyon and juniper, some quite ancient, carpet the great benches of the central and northern Kaiparowits Plateau. Left: Petrified sand dune near Ten Mile Wash, Escalante Canyons.

CANYONS WASHED IN COLOR

The expression *living color* took on an entirely new meaning when scientists discovered that the streaks of desert varnish which create magnificent tapestries on canyon walls and cliff faces are, well, alive.

It has long been known that desert varnish is a mix of airborne dust and clay particles left by water dripping down rock faces. But scientists have recently found that these particles are cemented to sandstone walls by bacteria and microfungi. Varnishes rich in iron appear dark red or rust colored, while those rich in manganese create streaks of black or iridescent blue-black, like a raven's wing.

The visual impact of desert varnish is made even more spectacular by the rich, multi-colored layers of rock it covers: creamy white Navajo, reddish-brown Entrada, or orange-brown Wingate. These rock colors have resulted from the direction the wind was blowing in those long-ago dune fields: western winds carried nearly white quartz particles while winds from the northeast deposited red sand.

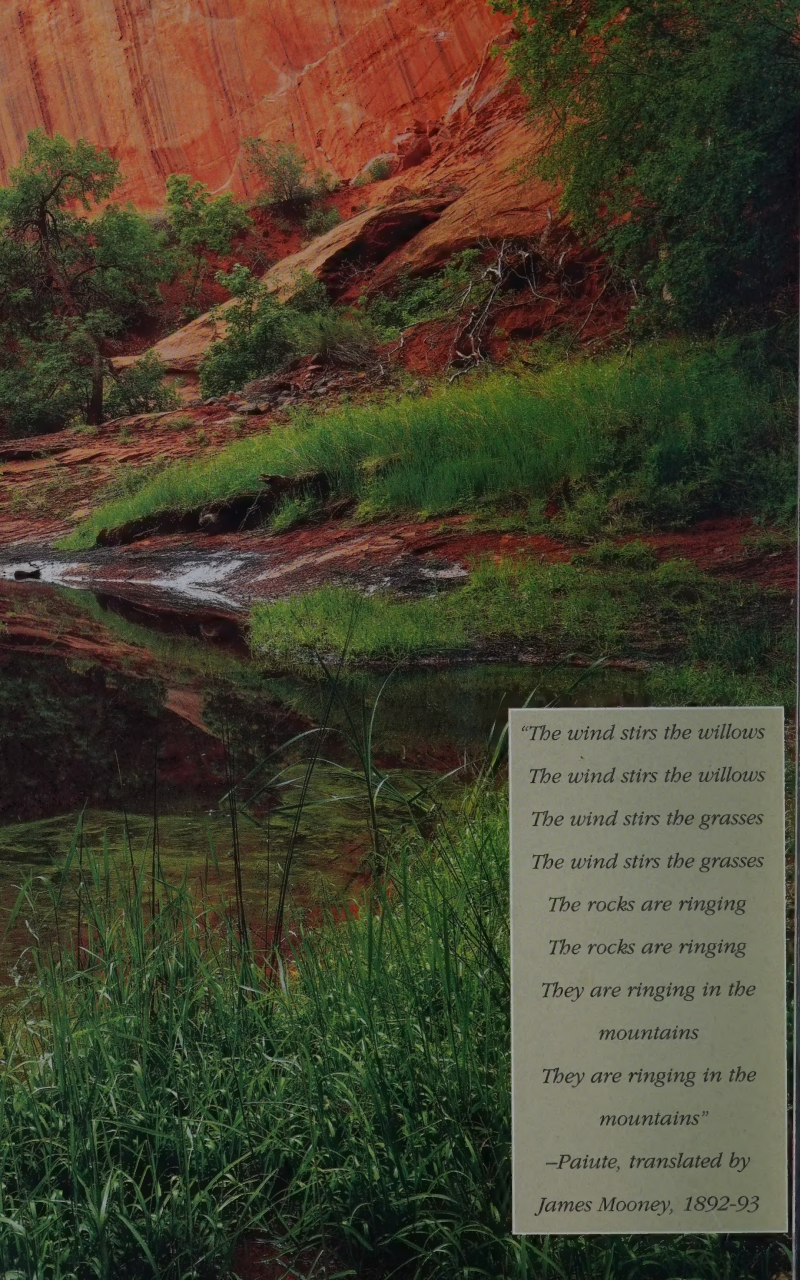
SAND INTO STONE

In the Jurassic Period a great sand sea covered all the land from Nevada to Colorado and Wyoming to Arizona. Underneath these white dunes were others, formed earlier and buried when streams and the sea invaded the dune fields. Erosion has subsequently exposed these 150 million year-old dunes. Most of the erosion has occurred only in the last two million years, or so, making the present perhaps the most scenic period in the Monument's long life.

From top to bottom: Squaw Canyon at sunset, Kaiparowits Plateau. Pack rat midden in sandstone erosion. National rock sculpture north of Highway 89, Grand Staircase. Badlands between Warm Creek and Big Water, Kaiparowits Plateau. Twisted juniper trunk in Long Canyon, Escalante Canyons. Autumn colors in The Blues, near Henrieville, Grand Staircase.

Even areas of little vegetation in the Monument abound with small rodents. This pinyon mouse lives in pinyon and juniper woodlands.

GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE



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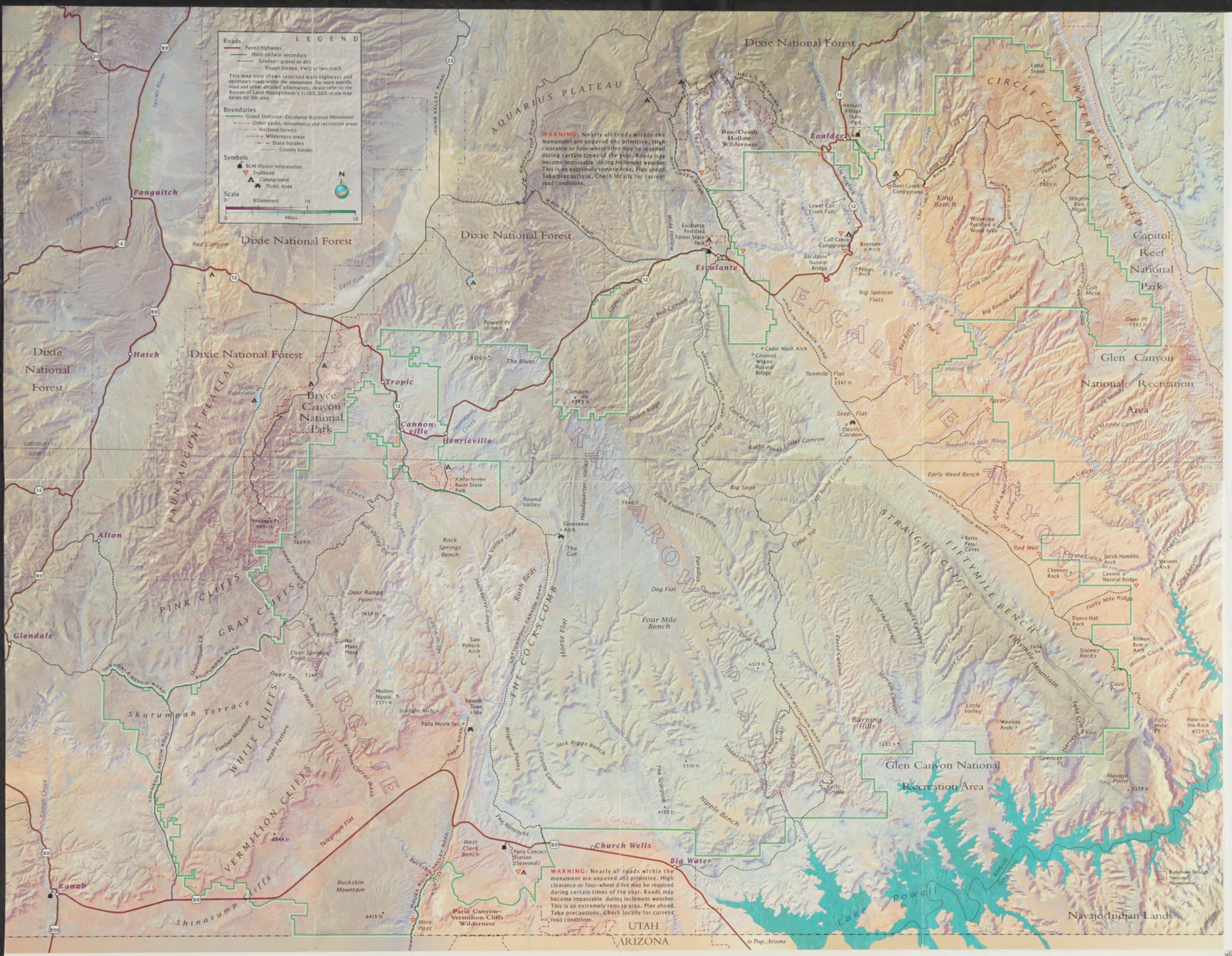
–Paiute, translated by James Mooney, 1892-93



A FIERCE & DANGEROUS LAND

Grosvenor Arch, Grand Staircase.

Exploring the Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument can be an adventure. But adventure can quickly turn to disaster if a breakdown of equipment or a sudden change in weather catches you unprepared. Above everything else the Monument is REMOTE and nearly all its roads are PRIMITIVE. Acquire good information before venturing into the Monument's interior, including a map you understand and can read. Think of time and level of difficulty, not just miles. Choose roads and trails that match your skills and experience. Always bring plenty of water, and make sure that your vehicle is in good working condition and adequately supplied for emergencies.

PLAN YOUR TRIP Services and water (except seasonally at Calf Creek campground) are not available in the Monument. When heading into the back country, tell friends where you are going and for how long. Stick to your plan and let them know when you return. Don't travel or hike alone.

ROADS All roads within the Monument's interior, except for portions of the Burr Trail and the Johnson Canyon Road, are unpaved. The principal access roads within the Monument shown on this map are dirt or gravel surfaced and intermittently maintained late spring through fall. Unmaintained routes are rough, rocky, or traverse areas of deep sand requiring high clearance or 4WD. Bad weather can leave any dirt or gravel road impassable, sometimes for several days. Carry extra clothing, food, and water. Some roads, including the Skutumpah, Cottonwood Canyon, Smoky Mountain, Hole-in-the-Rock, and the Paria River Valley roads, cross sections with a clay surface which becomes extremely slippery when wet. All dirt roads should be avoided during inclement weather. Check locally for current road conditions and weather forecasts.

GASOLINE Make sure you start with a full tank of fuel; gasoline is available in the communities surrounding the Monument.

WATER Carry plenty of water, at least one gallon per person per day, whether you are hiking or driving. Don't ration your water. It will do you good only if you drink it.

FLASH FLOODS Don't camp or park your vehicle in a wash or stream bed, and avoid hiking in narrow slot canyons when rain is a possibility. A dry wash can flash flood in minutes, even if you do not see a cloud in the sky.

HEAT Protect against heat exhaustion. Do not overexert yourself. Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid extreme midday temperatures in the summer. Wear a hat and lots of sun screen.

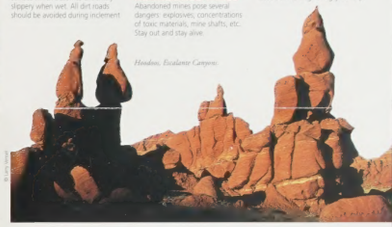
ABANDONED MINES Abandoned mines pose several dangers: explosives; concentrations of toxic materials, mine shafts, etc. Stay out and stay alive.

FIRST AID Carry a first aid kit in your car and pack. Know how to use it.

WEATHER Late spring (April–June depending on elevation) and early fall (September–October) are probably the best times to visit. However, gnats and deerflies can be troublesome in May and June. Sudden changes in weather can occur at any time, particularly at higher elevations.

July and August are the months for thunderstorms, although the rainy season can last well into September. Many of the Monument's dirt roads become impassable when wet. Summer temperatures may reach 100°F or more at lower elevations but will be cooler in the higher drainages.

During the winter months snow and sub-zero temperatures can occur throughout the Monument. Always inquire locally about the weather forecast before beginning your trip.



Hoodoos, Escalante Canyons.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Garfield County Sheriff	911 or 435/676-2678
Kane County Sheriff	911 or 435/644-2349
Bureau of Land Management, Escalante	435/826-5499
Bureau of Land Management, Kanab	435/644-2672

SERVICES

KANAB	medical, lodging, restaurants, gas, auto repair/towing, groceries, campgrounds, guides, BLM office
BIG WATER PAGE, AZ	lodging, restaurant medical, lodging, restaurants, gas, auto repair/towing, groceries, campgrounds
BOULDER ESCALANTE	lodging, restaurants, gas, auto repair, guides, groceries limited medical, lodging, restaurants, gas, auto repair/towing, groceries, campgrounds, guides, BLM/interagency office
TROPIC CANNONVILLE BRYCE CANYON	lodging, restaurants, gas, groceries, campgrounds lodging, gas, groceries lodging, restaurants, gas, auto repair/towing, groceries, campgrounds, guides

For additional travel and commercial service information contact:

KANE COUNTY TRAVEL COUNCIL
78 S 100 E, Kanab, UT 84741
800/733-5263
Or access on-line information at http://www.escalante-ut.com or http://www.kanetah.com

GARFIELD COUNTY TRAVEL COUNCIL
PO Box 200, Panguitch, UT 84759
800/444-6689

INFORMATION

For road conditions, other maps, hike suggestions or permits, outfitters, and other information, please stop by or contact the Bureau of Land Management:

Escalante BLM Field Office, PO Box 225, Escalante, UT 84726
Kanab BLM Field Office, 318 North First East, Kanab, UT 84741
Or access general information on-line at http://www.blm.gov/utah

"Carry water and use your wits."
–Donald Snow

The Blues, Grand Staircase. For badlands, the badder they are the better they get. The Blues—starkly colored, Cretaceous shaley badlands near Bryce Canyon—are pretty bad, making them a major scenic attraction for travelers along Highway 12 between Henrieville and Escalante.

GETTING AROUND

Two paved roads provide access to the Monument: Highway 89 on the south and Highway 12 on the north. Five secondary roads of varying character traverse the Monument from north to south.

HIGHWAY 89 Paved two-lane highway, 72 miles between Kanab and Page, AZ. Views to the Vermilion Cliffs and Kaiparowits Plateau. Access to: Grand Staircase, Paiute town site and movie set, Paria Canyon–Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness.

HIGHWAY 12 Paved two-lane highway, 68 miles between Tropic and Boulder, UT. Panoramas of vast slickrock "oceans" and scenic canyons cut by the Escalante River. Numerous roadside overlooks and wayside exhibits. Access to: several small towns rich in pioneer heritage, Escalante Canyon country vistas, Escalante Petrified Forest State Park, Calf Creek Recreation Area, Escalante River, Anasazi Indian Village State Park.

PARIA RIVER VALLEY ROAD Dirt and gravel surface, 5 miles. Dry weather only; extremely slippery during inclement weather. Short excursion to Paria River Valley setting among technicolor badlands landscape. Access to: Pahreah town site, western movie set location.

JOHNSON CANYON SKUTUMPAH ROAD Paved and graded/dirt surface, 46 miles. Upper section can become impassable when wet. 22 miles: Traverses Grand Staircase steps. Views to Pink Cliffs. Access to: Grand Staircase cliff and terrace steps, Bull Valley Gorge.

COTTONWOOD CANYON ROAD Graded dirt and gravel surface, 46 miles. Dry weather only; becomes extremely slick and treacherous when wet. Much of the route follows the Cockscomb, a major flexure of the earth's crust that divides the Grand Staircase and Kaiparowits Plateau regions. Access to: Round Valley, Cockscomb, Cottonwood Narrows, Grosvenor Arch, Kodachrome Basin State Park.

SMOKY MOUNTAIN ROAD Graded dirt and gravel; several sections of this road require high clearance vehicles, 78 miles. Drivers must navigate with care, particularly at intersections, to stay on this road. The Kaiparowits Plateau is extremely remote; visitors must come prepared. Good maps and vehicles in good working condition and properly supplied for emergencies are necessary. A plateau-top road with magnificent vistas. Access to: Kaiparowits Plateau back country, vistas of Lake Powell.

HOLE-IN-THE-ROCK ROAD Graded dirt and gravel, 57 miles. Passenger cars with clearance are normally adequate; but the last six miles before Hole-in-the-Rock in Glen Canyon National Recreation Area are rough and may require 4WD. Follows the historic route taken by Mormon settlers in 1879-80 on their journey across the Colorado River. Access to: Devil's Garden, Escalante Canyon trailheads, Dance Hall Rock, vistas of Lake Powell from Hole-in-the-Rock.

BURR TRAIL Paved for 31 miles between Boulder and Capitol Reef National Park. The rest is dirt and gravel surface with some rocky and sandy stretches. High-clearance vehicles recommended if you explore off Burr Trail. Slickrock, water, canyons and expansive vistas. Access to: Deer Creek, The Gulch, Long Canyon, Wolverine Petrified Wood Area, Circle Cliffs region.

"To borrow a term recently coined by mathematicians, the landscape is 'fractal,' no matter how closely you examine or how thoroughly you explore it, its complexity remains infinite. You could spend a lifetime in the Escalante without fully exploring it, yet a single week there can exhaust the mind with its diversity, its fusion of the vast and the intimate."
–Ray Wheeler

MANAGEMENT Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument is unique among the public lands of the United States. Not only its size, geology, and the scientific value of its lands set it apart from other national monuments but it is the only one managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Grand Staircase–Escalante National Monument encompasses more than just the lands within its boundaries: it cannot be separated from the human communities bordering it. Generations of people have grown up with the Monument's lands as their back yard. The land has provided forage for their livestock, wild game for their tables, wood for their stoves, rocks for their buildings. But use does not exclude love or appreciation of the land, and the people whose lives are still interwoven with the country have a special relationship with it. The new Monument intends to preserve this relationship and the continuation of traditional uses of the land such as hunting, fishing, grazing, and various forms of recreation.

Burning Hills, Kaiparowits Plateau. In the Burning Hills area underground coal fires have oxidized the overlying strata, giving the hills three distinctive red colors. The fires are burning still; in places you can feel the heat rising from the ground.

WHILE YOU ARE HERE

HIKING Perhaps the best way to experience the diverse terrain of the Monument is to walk through it. Even though developed trails are nearly nonexistent, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of miles of outstanding hiking routes found in the Escalante Canyons, the upper Paria drainage, and other areas. Spring (March through May) and Fall (September through October) are usually the ideal times to hike or backpack. A good map and route finding abilities are a must. Self-register at established trailheads or obtain a free backpacking permit at the Interagency Office if backpacking in the Escalante region. Please leave no trace of your passing.

SCENIC DRIVES Many of the principal roads to and through the Monument have been designated scenic backways. Highway 12 is widely recognized as one of the most scenic drives in the United States. Highway 89, along the southern boundary of the Monument between Kanab and Big Water offers outstanding views of the Vermilion Cliffs and the Kaiparowits Plateau. Six designated Back Country Backways along more primitive secondary roads provide an off-the-beaten-path adventure into the Monument.

CAMPING Two small, modestly developed campgrounds are open year-round on a first-come, first-served basis in the Monument: Calf Creek (13 sites) next to Highway 12 and Deer Creek (5 sites) along the Burr Trail have picnic tables, grills, and toilets. Water is available spring through fall at Calf Creek only. Nearby state parks, national forests, and commercial campgrounds in neighboring communities provide additional campground options. Back-country camping at undeveloped campsites is allowed at certain areas of the Monument. Please observe minimum impact camping techniques to preserve the land. Camp at previously used sites, cook with a camp stove rather than an open fire, and locate your camp at least 300 feet from springs and other scant water sources. Proper disposal of human waste and packing out what you pack in will help to keep the back country clean.

MOUNTAIN BIKING Several secondary roads such as the Hole-in-the-Rock road, Burr Trail, Cottonwood Canyon, the Wolverine Loop, and the Paria Valley roads offer good mountain biking routes both long and short. Please do not ride cross-country or alone, and take the same precautions as if you were hiking.

HUNTING & FISHING Hunting and fishing are traditional uses of the Monument's lands and they will remain so under the management of the State of Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. Please inquire locally for seasons, licenses, and other regulations.

4WD ROADS An extensive network of primitive 4WD vehicle routes provide access to much of the Monument's back country. Please stay on established routes. Some roads may be closed for the protection of resources; please obey these closures. Respect private property and lands; leave gates open or closed as you find them.

PRESERVE THE PAST Whether you drive or hike the back country, please remember that, long before the arrival of Europeans, people have lived over much of the Southwest. Signs of these ancient cultures are found within the Monument in the form of ruins, petroglyphs, and potsherds. To the native peoples of the Southwest these sites have significance. Admire the ruins if you come across one, marvel at those long-gone people who lived in an often inhospitable environment, ponder our common humanity—but leave everything where it is. To do otherwise is not only disrespectful but it is also against the law.

GUIDED TRIPS Given the remote, undeveloped nature of the Monument, guided adventures led by seasoned professional outfitters may be the best way for many to experience the Grand Staircase–Escalante. Many types of tours and activities, including hunting and fishing, bicycle treks, vehicle tours, and back-country hiking trips, are offered by local outfitters and guides. A list of permitted outfitters is available from the Bureau of Land Management.

The sego lily, Cleofas cane flower, has a bulbous root which was once used for food by Native Americans and Mormon settlers.

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GRAND STAIRCASE ESCALANTE

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